



**Final Results from the May 2016
Employee Engagement Follow-up Survey
Training, Resources and Support focus**

I. INTRODUCTION

In May 2016, the County of San Luis Obispo conducted an employee engagement follow-up survey with a focus on employee training and development. This survey included a few of the same training and development questions asked of employees in May 2014, when the County conducted a more comprehensive Employee Engagement and Needs Assessment survey. The purpose of the follow-up survey was four-fold: to

- determine the degree of improvement in the Training, Resources and Support scores following the launch of the Learning and Development Center (LDC) and the increased investment in leadership, software application and other Countywide training courses;
- identify additional employee training and development needs not currently being met;
- inform strategic planning for employee development over the next few years; and
- determine the effectiveness of LDC outreach and training promotion efforts.

Reading the report:

Ratings

The rating scale used in the survey for multiple choice questions was as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Results for closed-ended questions asked in both the Spring 2014 survey and this follow-up survey are reported in terms of the weighted average to show comparison of the results.

Results for other closed-ended question are shown in terms of the frequency each rating/response received.

Open ended questions were also included in order to gather additional insights from those respondents who disagreed with certain statements. However, it was possible for respondents who agreed with a statement to also include a response to the open-ended question. The responses to all open-ended questions were summarized in this report to maintain confidentiality.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall the average ratings in this follow-up survey were very positive and indicated improvement in providing training to employees to help them better perform their jobs. Employee satisfaction with training offerings from the LDC has improved. More training opportunities in the topics currently offered, as well as new topics, is also desired. Almost 78% of respondents indicate they are more aware of the training and development opportunities today than a year ago.

Unmet employee training and development needs identified

As was the case in the results to the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey, employees continue to identify a need for more job-specific skill development to help them perform their jobs well and to advance in their career. In addition, several comments were submitted requesting more education on department-specific policies and procedures as well as technology. Examples of job specific training sought include trauma-informed care and effectively working with those with mental health issues, Auto CAD, law enforcement related skills, building community coalitions, legal issues, etc.

Several comments were submitted requesting additional, and in some cases higher level, computer software courses in the Microsoft Office Suite programs (primarily) as well as in SAP. Several respondents expressed frustration with how quickly the current software courses offered by Software Solutions fill.

Many training topics requested are courses the Learning and Development Center already offer, such as business writing, presentation development and public speaking, application of County human-resources related rules and processes in the role as supervisor, and Benefits 101. Employees are also seeking leadership, supervision and management courses that are shorter in length and reinforce the information taught in the Manager and Supervisor academies. Additionally, training in team building, workload/time management, managing multiple priorities, safety-related courses, working with difficult people, and information about other County departments and County systems is sought.

Access to training is difficult for employees that work shifts other than the typical 8 am – 5 pm schedule, and it is difficult for them to adjust their schedule to attend courses during the day.

Effectiveness of Learning and Development Center outreach and promotion

A significant majority of respondents are aware of training and development options the LDC offers, and 76% of respondents have taken a course through the LDC. Almost 78% of the respondents reported they are more aware of training and development opportunities today than a year ago.

Most indicated their preferred means of notification about upcoming LDC training opportunities is via the monthly newsletter sent to all County employees via e-mail. A much smaller number of respondents prefer to learn about upcoming courses by accessing the LDC website <http://www.slocoldc.org/> or through their department Training Liaisons. Some respondents suggested they would prefer to learn about upcoming training and development opportunities from their supervisor or manager either in staff meetings or in one-on-one discussions.

Most employees indicate they are able to navigate the LDC website to see future training opportunities.

Next steps

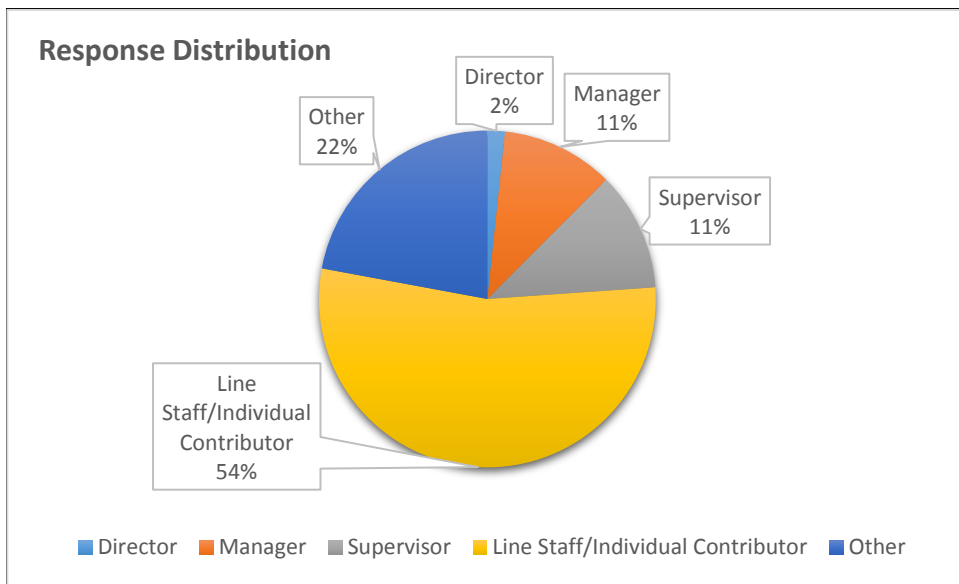
- Department heads will receive a copy of the results for their department, if multiple responses were received, in order to address noted job and department specific training needs.
- The LDC will:
 - work with its Executive Steering Committee as well as the County Administrative Office to determine needed changes to the menu of current training programs for the future;
 - add more advanced computer training programs in Microsoft Office and Outlook applications, and as funds become available, add more classes;
 - work with the Centre for Organization Effectiveness to offer short courses that meet training needs noted by respondents in the current fiscal year; and
 - implement additional strategies to promote Countywide training offerings and facilitate course registration for employees.

III. SURVEY RESULTS

Who responded?

The survey was sent out electronically to all County employees, which includes temporary help and interns with County e-mail access. Of the 3,075 employees, 833 responded to the survey, thus representing 27% of the County’s workforce.

As shown in the charts below, employees at all levels of the organization responded to survey. In response to the question “*What description best describes your position?*” the following distribution of responses were received:



Answer Options	Response Count	Response Percentage
Director	14	2%
Manager	90	11%
Supervisor	95	11%
Line Staff/Individual Contributor	450	54%
Other	184	22%
Total	833	100%

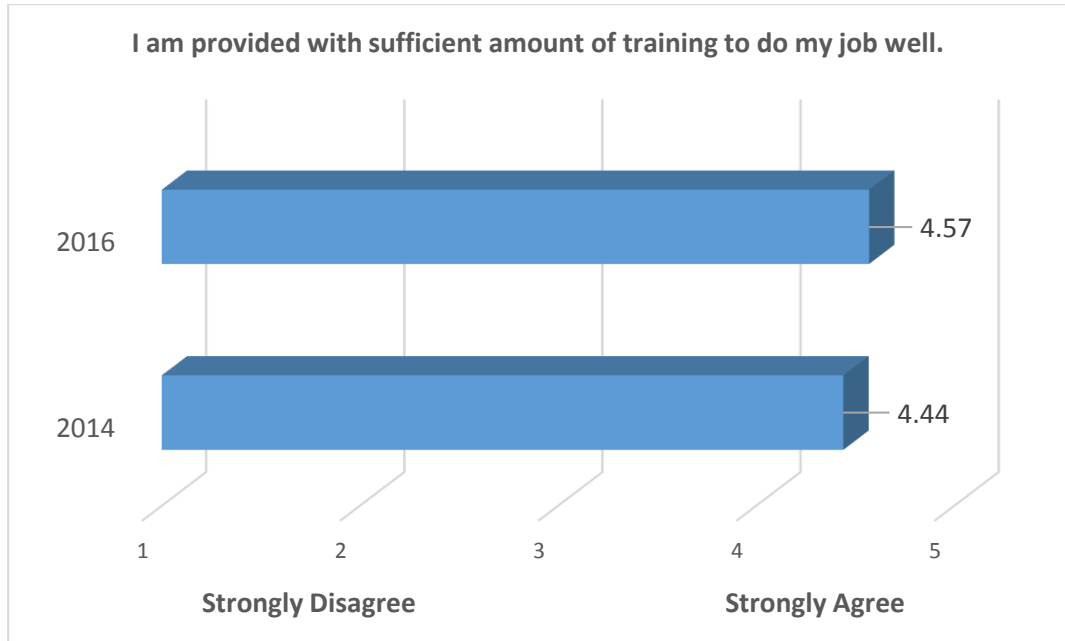
The response rates for each department were as follows:

Department	Number in Department*	Number of Responses	Response Rate
County Administrative Office/Emergency Services/Board of Supervisors	33	17	52%
Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures	69	24	35%
Airports	15	4	27%
Assessor's Office	80	22	28%
Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector - Public Administrator	69	21	30%
Central Services	15	9	60%
Child Support Services	36	14	39%
Clerk-Recorder	39	6	15%
County Fire	99	1	1%
County Counsel	20	6	30%
District Attorney	98	20	20%
Farm Advisor	5	4	80%
Health Agency	641	177	28%
Human Resources	35	20	57%
Information Technology	80	23	29%
Library	82	29	35%
Parks and Recreation	160	19	12%
Planning and Building	104	34	33%
Probation	156	34	22%
Public Works	305	76	25%
Sheriff-Corner	411	89	22%
Social Services	517	184	36%
Veteran's Services	6	0	0%
Total	3075	833	27%

Overview of ratings

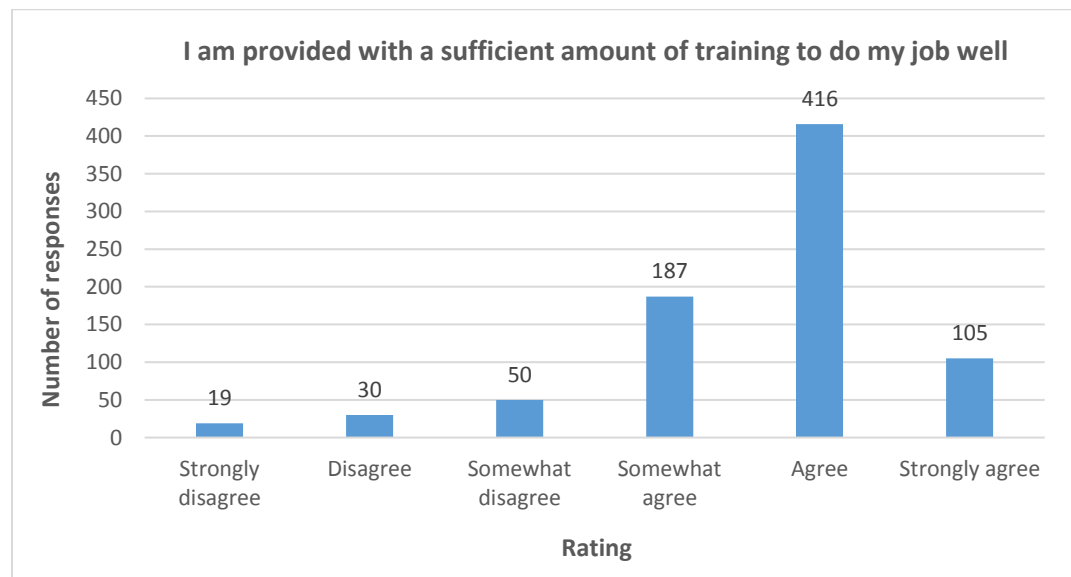
- A. The following is an overview of respondent ratings on questions that were also asked in the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey, comparing ratings received in each survey.

1. There was slight (3%) improvement in the average rating for the statement:
“I am provided with a sufficient amount of training to do my job well.”



Most respondents (65%) indicated they agree or strongly agree with this statement while 6% disagree or strongly disagree.

Below is a chart reflecting the distribution of ratings

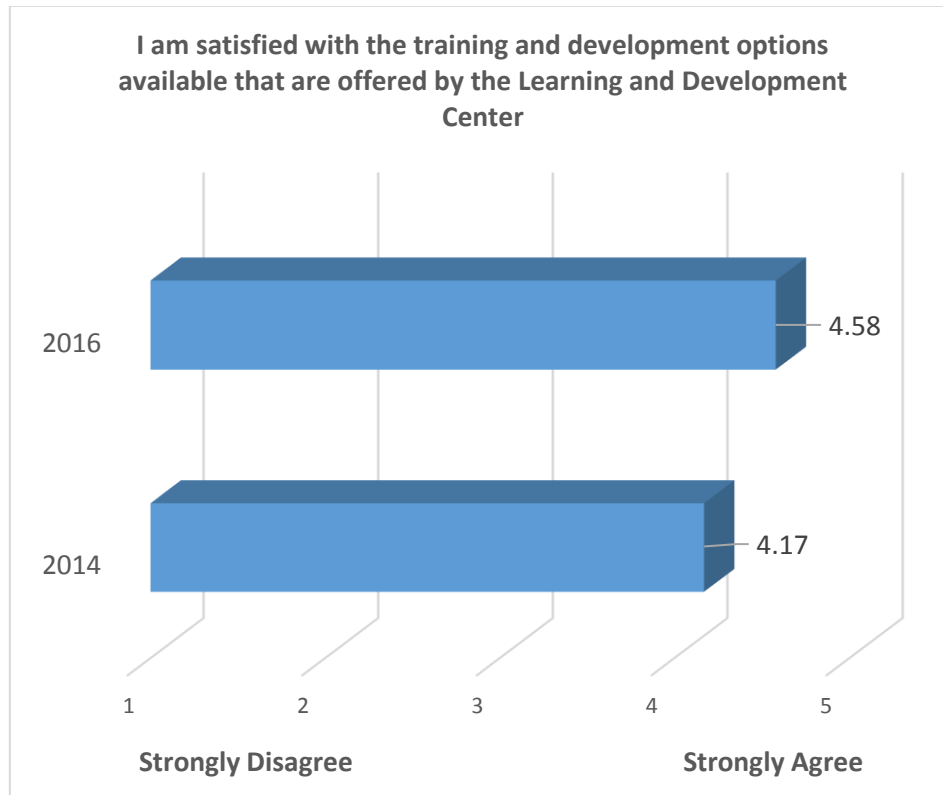


Comments from respondents who disagreed:

Ninety-two comments were provided to the follow-up question: *“If you disagree please indicate your professional development needs currently not being met.”*

Most comments related to the need for additional job or department-specific training needs (such as department orientation for new employees, departmental policies and procedures, job-specific skill enhancement, computer software and/or systems, etc.). Other comments indicated a need for additional computer software training (Microsoft Office Suite applications primarily, as well as SAP) including more advanced levels, more training in supervision and management, County systems such as pension, NeoGov, etc. There were a few comments indicating that workload and/or lack of sufficient staffing prevented employees from taking the time to attend training courses.

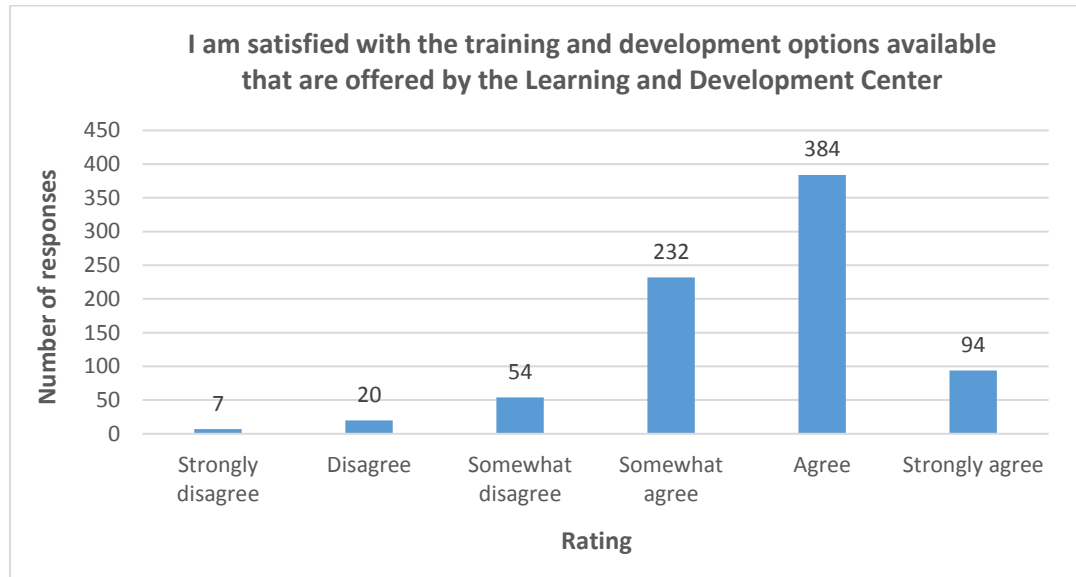
2. A 10% improvement was seen in the rating for employee satisfaction with training and development offerings by the LDC. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement: *I am satisfied with the training and development options available that are offered by the Learning and Development Center.**



(*Note: in the 2014 survey, the statement referred to training and development options offered by the Human Resources Department, which operated the Employee University, now known as the Learning and Development Center.)

Most of the 791 respondents (60%) agree or strongly agree to this statement while 6% disagree or strongly disagree.

Below is a chart reflecting the distribution of ratings

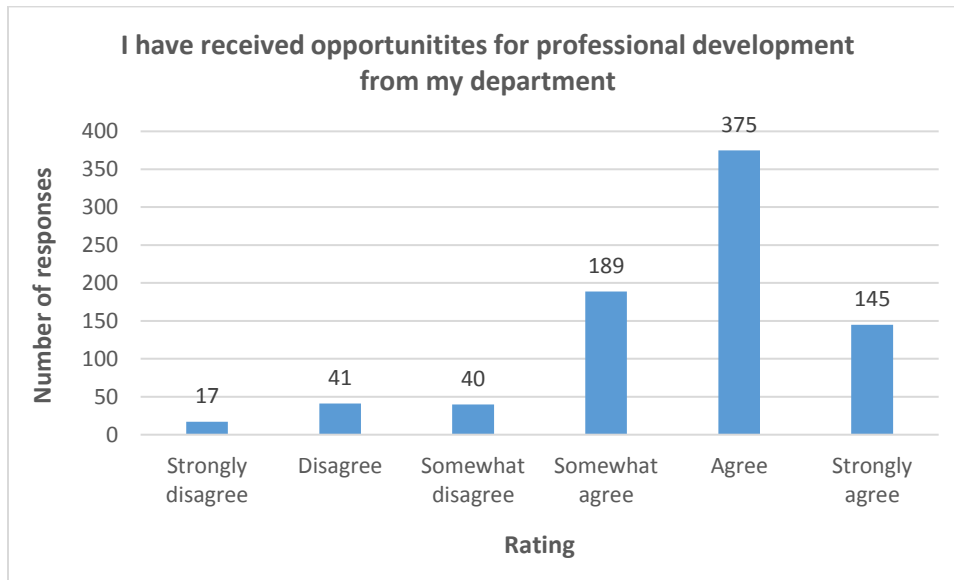


A total of 123 responses were provided to the follow-up question *“If you are not satisfied what training and development options are you looking for?”* Most comments refer to the need for job-specific training as well as computer software application courses. There were many comments expressing frustration that courses fill quickly, soon after announcing they are available.

Other comments request courses in communication and dealing with difficult people (including customers, clients, co-workers, etc.), time management, managing multiple priorities and short courses in supervision and management. There were several comments asking for courses that will help employees promote within the County, though no specifics were provided.

3. In response to the statement *“I have received opportunities for professional development from my department,”* 64% agreed while 12% disagreed. In the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey, this was posed as a yes/no question: 73% of respondents answered yes and 27% answered no.

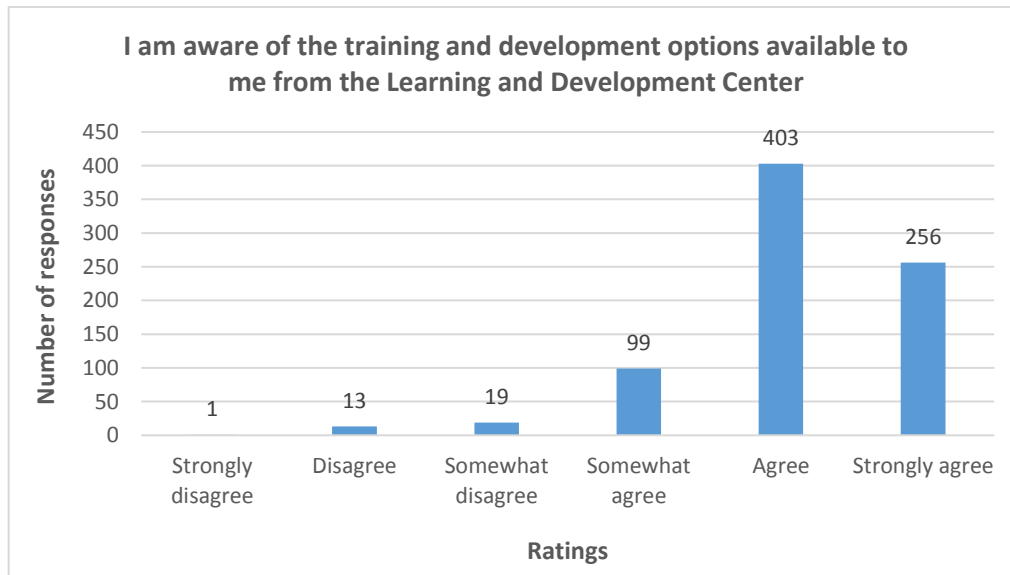
Below is a chart reflecting the distribution of ratings



B. The following is an overview of respondent ratings on new questions

1. The results of the survey indicate that most County employees are aware of the courses offered by the LDC. A majority of the respondents (83%) agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: *“I am aware of the training and development options available to me from the Learning and Development Center.”* Less than 2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

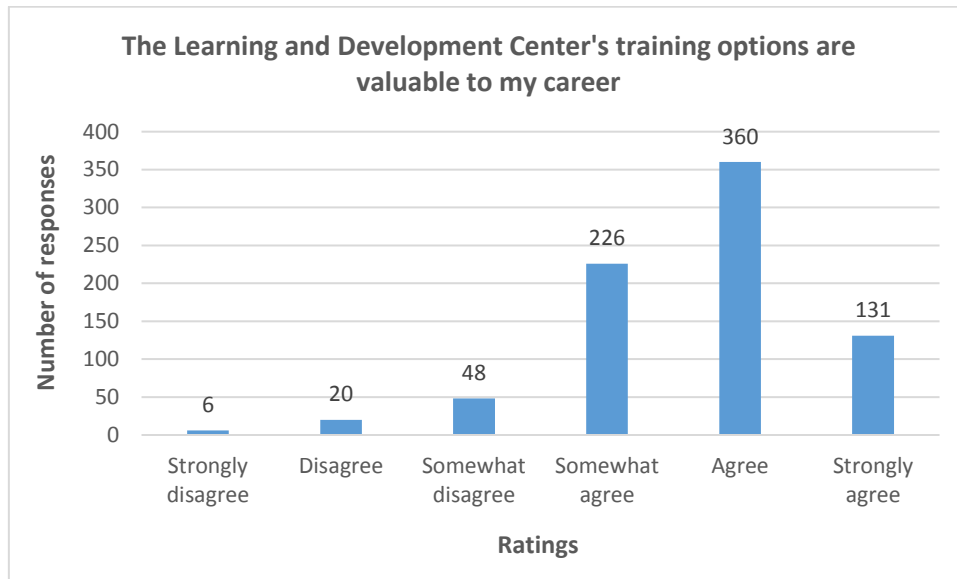
Below is a chart reflecting the distribution of ratings



A significant majority of County employees (86%) prefer to be notified of training and development opportunities by e-mail, including the LDC monthly newsletter. Other choices for notifying employees include the LDC website and department Training Liaisons – approximately 29% of respondents preferred these methods.

One choice in the survey was “Other” and respondents who selected this option were asked to specify their preferred method of notification. Responses to this option included notification from the employee’s supervisor or manager, announcements at staff meetings and e-mail. The LDC plans to continue sending out all employee e-mails with a list of upcoming courses. These notices will indicate whether a course has only a few seats left and whether a waiting list has been formed for courses that have filled. The e-mail will also include a link to the LDC website to facilitate course enrollment.

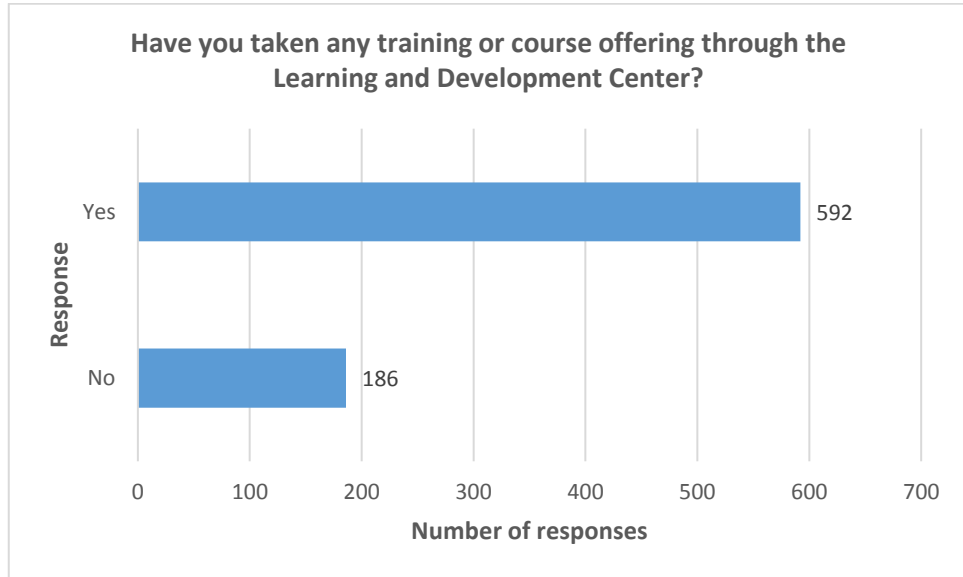
2. Most respondents (62%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: “*The Learning and Development Center's training options are valuable to my career.*” A small percentage of respondents disagreed with this statement as indicated in the chart below.



Those that disagreed were asked to respond to a follow up question: “*If you disagree, what options would you like to see offered to benefit your career?*”

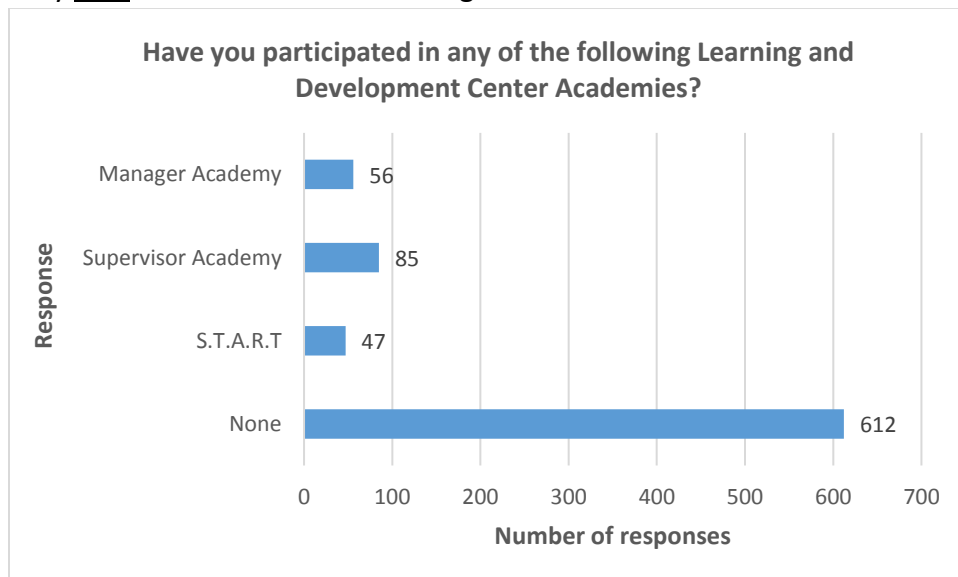
Many comments indicated a need for job-specific training. In addition, several comments called for software application training (especially in Microsoft Office programs and SAP) is requested, especially more advanced levels.

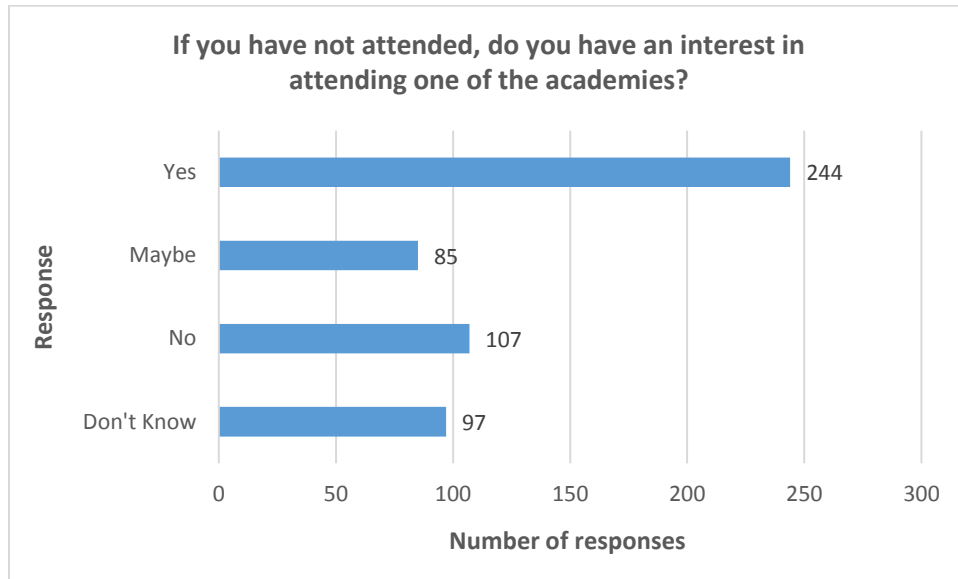
3. A majority of respondents (76%) have taken a course through the LDC.



Respondents who indicated they have not attended LDC-offered training courses were asked to respond to the follow up question: *"If not, what is the reason?"* Common reasons provided include: desired courses are full or held at times that conflict with work, lack of time to attend training (workload), training courses are not available during work schedules (those that work evening and weekend shifts), the training topics are not related to their job, and the employee is either new or an intern/temp help.

4. 79% of respondents have not yet participated in either the Manager or Supervisor Academy or the START program. Of those who have not participated, 40% indicate they are interested in attending one of these programs and another 33% indicated they may be interested in attending.





5. In terms of use of the LDC website, 66% agree or strongly agree that they are able to easily navigate the LDC site, and 73% agree or strongly agree they are able to sign up for training through the LDC website.

6. Almost 78% of respondents indicated they are more aware of the training and development opportunities today than a year ago
 - 77.56% or 598 indicated yes
 - 22.44% or 173 indicated no

7. Finally, employees were asked to provide responses to the following open-ended statement: *“In the future, I would like to have training opportunities on:”*

As was the case in other open-ended questions related to unmet training needs, many comments refer to job-specific training needs. Again, there were many requests for computer software applications training; Microsoft Office programs in particular, as well as SAP. There were also several comments calling for more advanced levels of EXCEL and Word, and fewer requests for classes in PowerPoint and advanced classes in ACCESS. As noted above, some respondents expressed frustration with computer training courses filling quickly and requested that more courses be added.

Several respondents are seeking supervision and management short courses as a follow-on to the academies. Specific topics noted include various styles of leadership, strategies to motivate staff, and performance management.

Other suggested topics were identified such as: communication (including DISC), customer service, dealing with difficult people, conflict resolution in the workplace, writing skills, HR-related topics (such as the discipline process, FMLA, etc.), safety in the workplace, emergency response, public speaking, time management and managing multiple priorities. Many of these requested courses are already offered by the LDC.

Some employees suggested providing the the Cuesta College Professional Development courses. The LDC will research this possibility for the future.

Finally, there were general comments asking for courses that will help employees promote within the County, however specific topics were not identified. Several of the courses offered by the LDC are designed to build competencies to improve performance and thus, likelihood of advancement when opportunities arise. The key is to apply what is learned in the class, on the job in a consistent and effective manner.